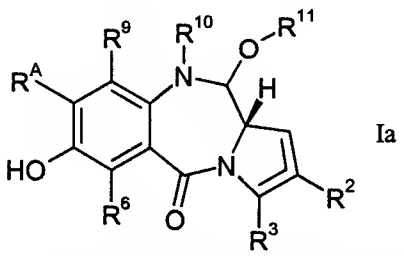
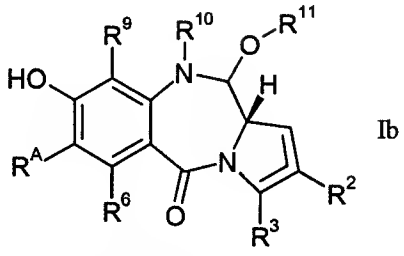
Amendments to the Claims:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A compound of formula **Ia** or **Ib:**



Ia



Ib

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt[[s]] ~~or solvates~~ thereof, wherein:

the dotted lines indicate the optional presence of a double bond between C1 and C2 or C2 and C3;

R^2 and R^3 are independently selected from –H, =O, $=CH_2$, -CN, -R, OR, halo, =CH-R, $O\text{-}SO_2\text{-}R$, CO_2R and COR;

R^6 and R^9 are independently selected from H, R, OH, OR, SH, SR, NH_2, NHR, NRR', nitro, Me_3Sn and halo;

where R and R' are independently selected from optionally substituted $C_{1\text{-}12}$ alkyl, heterocyclyl groups having 3 to 20 ring atoms of which 1 to 10 are heteroatoms independently selected from the group consisting of N, O and S and aryl or heteroaryl groups having 5 to 20 ring atoms, the heteroaryl groups having one or more heteroatoms independently selected from the group consisting of N, O and S, wherein the optional substituents are independently selected from halo, hydroxy, ether, alkoxy, acetal, hemiacetal, ketal, hemiketal, oxo, thione, imino, formyl, acyl, carboxy, thiocarboxy, thiolcarboxy, thionocarboxy, imidic acid, hydroxamic acid, ester, acyloxy, oxycaroyloxy, amino, amido, thioamido, acylamido, aminocaronyloxy, ureido, guanidino, tetrazolyl, amidino, nitro, nitroso, azido, cyano, isocyano, cyanato, isocyanato, thiocyano, isothiocyano, sulfhydryl, disulfide, sulfine, sulfonyl, sulfino, sulfo, sulfinate, sulfonate, sulfinyloxy, sulfonyloxy, sulfate, sulfamyl, sulfonamido, sulfamino, sulfonamino, sulfinamino, phosphino, phosphor, phosphinyl, phosphono, phosphonate, phosphonooxy, phosphate, phosphorous acid, phosphite, phosphoramidite, or phosphoramidate;

R^A is selected from H, R, OR, SH, SR, NH_2, NHR, NRR', nitro, Me_3Sn and halo;

R^{10} is a carbamate-based nitrogen protecting group; and

R^{11} is an oxygen protecting group.

2. (Original) A compound according to claim 1, wherein R^A is independently selected from H, OR, SH, SR, NH_2, NHR, NRR' and halo.

3. (Previously presented) A compound according to claim 1, wherein R^{11} is THP or a silyl oxygen protecting group.

4. (Previously presented) A compound according to claim 1, wherein R^{10} is BOC or Troc.

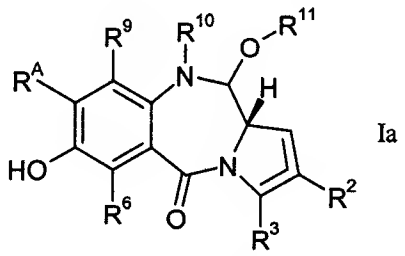
5. (Previously presented) A compound according to claim 1, wherein R^9 is H.

6. (Previously presented) A compound according to claim 1, wherein R^2 is R.

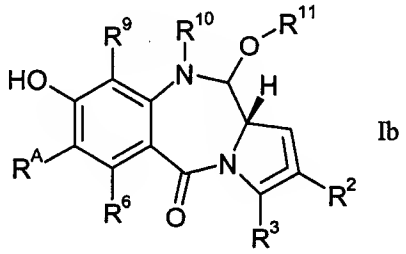
7. (Previously presented) A compound according to claim 1, wherein R^6 is selected from H, OH, OR, SH, NH_2, nitro and halo.

8-25. (Canceled)

26. (Currently Amended) A method of synthesising a compound of formula **Ia** or **Ib**:

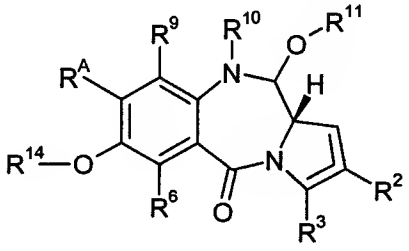


Ia

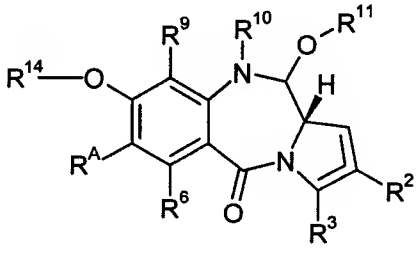


Ib

from a compound of formula **IIa** or **IIb** respectively:



IIa



IIb

comprising ~~removing R_{14},~~ deprotecting a C7 or C8 hydroxyl moiety,

wherein:

the dotted lines indicate the optional presence of a double bond between C1 and C2 or C2 and C3;

R^2 and R^3 are independently selected from –H, =O, $=CH_2$, -CN, -R, OR, halo, =CH-R, $O-SO_2-R$, CO_2R and COR;

R^6 and R^9 are independently selected from H, R, OH, OR, SH, SR, NH_2, NHR, NRR', nitro, Me_3Sn and halo;

where R and R' are independently selected from optionally substituted C_{1-12} alkyl, heterocyclyl groups having 3 to 20 ring atoms of which 1 to 10 are heteroatoms independently selected from the group consisting of N, O and S and aryl or heteroaryl groups having 5 to 20 ring atoms, the heteroaryl groups having one or more heteroatoms independently selected from the group consisting of N, O and S, wherein the optional substituents are independently selected from halo, hydroxy, ether, alkoxy, acetal, hemiacetal, ketal, hemiketal, oxo, thione, imino, formyl, acyl, carboxy, thiocarboxy, thiolcarboxy, thionocarboxy, imidic acid, hydroxamic acid, ester, acyloxy, oxycaroyloxy, amino, amido, thioamido, acylamido, aminocaronyloxy, ureido, guanidino, tetrazolyl, amidino, nitro, nitroso, azido, cyano, isocyano, cyanato, isocyanato, thiocyano, isothiocyano, sulfhydryl, disulfide, sulfine, sulfonyl, sulfino, sulfo, sulfinate, sulfonate, sulfinyloxy, sulfonyloxy, sulfate, sulfamyl, sulfonamido, sulfamino, sulfonamino, sulfinamino, phosphino, phosphor, phosphinyl, phosphono, phosphonate, phosphonooxy, phosphate, phosphorous acid, phosphite, phosphoramidite, or phosphoramidate;

R^A is selected from H, R, OR, SH, SR, NH_2, NHR, NRR', nitro, Me_3Sn and halo;

R^{10} is a carbamate-based nitrogen protecting group;

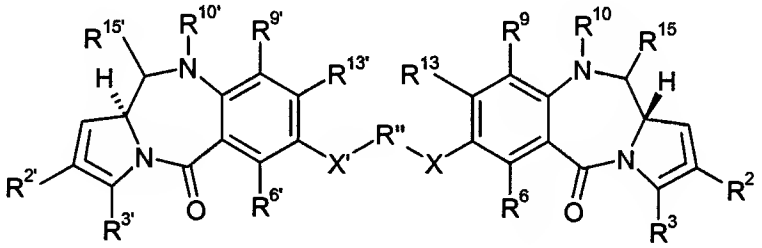
R^{11} is an oxygen protecting group; and

R^{14} is an oxygen protecting group orthogonal to R^{11}.

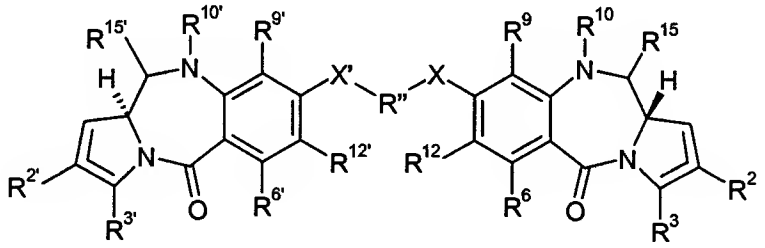
27. (Original) A method according to claim 26, wherein R^{14} is benzyl ether and R^A is OMe or H.

28. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 26, wherein R^{11} is THP or a silyl oxygen protecting group.

29. (Currently amended) A method of synthesising a compound of formula **IIIa** or **IIIb**:

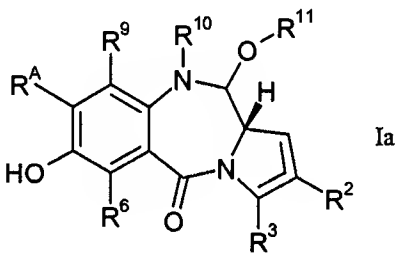


IIIa

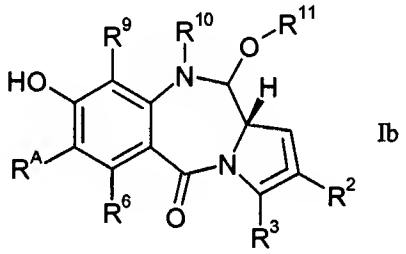


IIIb

~~or a solvate thereof~~, from a compound of formula **Ia** or **Ib** respectively:



Ia



Ib

wherein:

the dotted lines indicate the optional presence of a double bond between C1 and C2 or C2 and C3;

R^2 and R^3 are independently selected from –H, =O, $=CH_2$, -CN, -R, OR, halo, =CH-R, $O\text{-}SO_2\text{-}R$, CO_2R and COR;

R^6, R^9, R^{12} and R^{13} are independently selected from H, R, OH, OR, SH, SR, NH_2, NHR, NRR', nitro, Me_3Sn and halo; where R and R' are independently selected from optionally substituted $C_{1\text{-}12}$ alkyl, heterocyclyl groups having 3 to 20 ring atoms of which 1 to 10 are heteroatoms independently selected from the group consisting of N, O and S and aryl or heteroaryl groups having 5 to 20 ring atoms, the heteroaryl groups having one or more heteroatoms independently selected from the group consisting of N, O and S, wherein the optional substituents are independently selected from halo, hydroxy, ether, alkoxy, acetal, hemiacetal, ketal, hemiketal, oxo, thione, imino, formyl, acyl, carboxy, thiocarboxy, thiolcarboxy, thionocarboxy, imidic acid, hydroxamic acid, ester, acyloxy, oxycaroyloxy, amino, amido, thioamido, acylamido,

aminocaronyloxy, ureido, guanidino, tetrazolyl, amidino, nitro, nitroso, azido, cyano, isocyano, cyanato, isocyanato, thiocyano, isothiocyano, sulfhydryl, disulfide, sulfine, sulfonyl, sulfino, sulfo, sulfinate, sulfonate, sulfinyloxy, sulfonyloxy, sulfate, sulfamyl, sulfonamido, sulfamino, sulfonamino, sulfinamino, phosphino, phosphor, phosphinyl, phosphono, phosphonate, phosphonooxy, phosphate, phosphorous acid, phosphite, phosphoramidite, or phosphoramidate;

R^A is selected from H, R, OR, SH, SR, NH_2, NHR, NRR', nitro, Me_3Sn and halo;

R^{10} is a carbamate-based nitrogen protecting group and R^{15} is either O-R^{11}, wherein R^{11} is an oxygen protecting group, or OH, or R^{10} and R^{15} together form a double bond between N10 and C11; and

where R" is a C_{3-12} alkylene group, and each X is ~~independently selected from~~ O~~, S, or NH~~; and $R^{2'}$, $R^{3'}$, $R^{6'}$, $R^{9'}$, $R^{10'}$, $R^{12'}$, $R^{13'}$ and $R^{15'}$ are all independently selected from the same lists as previously defined for R^2, R^3, R^6, R^9, R^{10}, R^{12}, R^{13} and R^{15} respectively,

comprising either:

(a) reacting a compound of formula **Ia** or **Ib** with a compound having the formula Y-R"-Y' to yield a compound of formula **IIIa** or **IIIb**; or

(b) (i) reacting a compound of formula **Ia** or **Ib** with a compound having the formula Y-R"-YProt, and

(ii) converting YProt in the reaction product from (i) to Y', and

(iii) reacting the product from (ii) with a compound of formula **Ia** or **Ib** to yield a compound of formula **IIIa** or **IIIb**;

wherein:

Y, Y' are independently selected from OH, I, Br, Cl, mesylate or tosylate;

YProt is a precursor to Y' or a chemically protected form of Y' having a protecting group that is orthogonal to R^{10} and R^{11}.

30. Canceled.

31. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 29, wherein Y and Y' are I.

32. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 29, wherein Y is OH and YProt is O-benzyl.